particles. It is held at approximately 30° to the seed surface and signs of feeding are circular holes with raised edges, the size of the case apertures, on the green seed covering. One seed had two such holes in one surface and one in each of the other two surfaces. Both cases were found on trailers near to the ground and concealed by other vegetation.

I have found no way of distinguishing the imago, usually somewhat rubbed, from the number of other similar species of *Coleophora* that are common in a trap at the appropriate time of the year. I have dissected all *Coleophora* moths coming to my trap since 1986 and this has revealed five specimens (earliest 23rd June, latest 27th July) over five years from Winchester VC11. Dr J.R. Langmaid has had a slightly less number from Southsea VC11 and the late Mr D.W.H. ffennell used to take it regularly but not commonly at his trap at Martyr Worthy VC12. This year Dr P.H. Sterling passed to me all the *Coleophora* that came to his trap at Didcot VC22 and dissection showed that these included one *C. therinella*. This would seem to indicate that the species is fairly widespread but at very low density and that, unless the new knowledge of its larval habits enable more larvae to be found, its true distribution will only be known if the genitalia of all *Coleophora* found between late June and late July are examined.—Col. D.H. STERLING, "Tangmere", 2 Hampton Lane, Winchester, Hants SO22 5LF.

Unusual dates for imagines of *Mythimna straminea* (Treit.) and *M. comma* (L.) (Lep.: Noctuidae) in1990.

Whilst enjoying an entomologically exciting holiday at Branscombe in South Devon (see details elsewhere) I was surprised to take a fresh specimen of *Mythimna straminea* (Treit.), the Southern Wainscot, on 1st October. This record was capped when I found a fresh specimen of *M. comma* (L.), the Shoulder Striped Wainscot in my garden trap at Virginia Water, N.W. Surrey, on the night of 24th October.

M. straminea is stated to be univoltine throughout its range and *M. comma* is essentially univoltine in Britain, though occasional second brood examples have been noted. On the Continent this latter species is regularly bivoltine over at least part of its range. I know of no previous October records for *straminea* and the *comma* is the first I have seen in the autumn in 21 years of recording here. Both specimens could have been the result of delayed emergence from the regular June brood (*comma*) or July brood (*straminea*). However, a second generation seems more likely, especially in the case of *comma*.

The extended summers and mild winters we have enjoyed in Britain over the past several years may well have prompted *comma* to adopt the more regular bivoltine habit of this species in Europe. And are the same climatic conditions triggering a possible bivoltine tendency in *straminea,* at least over the most southern part of its range? Certain species are well known to produce an additional generation in those years when the summer is fine

and/or the onset of winter is delayed. Further records are necessary to determine whether the list of insects with this habit is growing longer as a result of the current trend to climatic warming in Britain.

References

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—PETER BAKER, Mount Vale, The Drive, Virginia Water, Surrey GU25 4BP.

An exceptionally early date for the Stag beetle *Lucanus cervus* L.

The advanced emergence of many insects has been quite remarkable in 1990, none more so than that of the Stag Beetle *Lucanus cervus*. In the suburbs of south London, this is a common species from mid June onwards, with males frequently encountered on pavements. This year, the earliest record I have is 6th May (1990) when two males were seen on the pavement near my home. At the same locality on 15th May, I saw a solitary male and a pair *in cop*. All of these individuals are likely to have emerged from an old lime *Tilia* x *europaea* stump which has been colonised for many years.

On the subject of Stag beetles, the following observations may also be of interest: Stag beetles, especially males, are readily attracted to m.v. lights. Grounded individuals require a vantage point from which to take off and climb any appropriate vegetation as a prelude to wing beating. By chance, the majority climb frail plants and, consequently, as they flap their wings the plant bends over, directing the hapless beetle earthbound again. To be successful, it seems that the insect must be virtually vertical whilst taking off.

The ability of male Stag beetles to use their mandibles seems to be underestimated by some people. They are by no means as weak as some would believe. This was clearly illustrated by my cat, when playing with a male Stag beetle which had come to my m.v. light the previous night. Soon, there was a loud scream as the cat leapt into the air impaled through its nostril by the beetle's mandibles which are clearly both fast and powerful, and deserve respect.— R.K.A. MORRIS, 241 Commonside East, Mitcham, Surrey CR4 1HB.

***Dichrorampha senectana* (Guenée) bred from *C. leucanthemum* (L.), Ox-eye Daisy.**

Little seems to be known of the larval foodplant of this species in Britain. Bradley, Tremewan and Smith (1979) cite Meyrick (1928) as stating that it perhaps feeds on *Chrysanthemum* and continental authors who record the same foodplant. Emmet (1988) cites these continental authors.

On 11th October 1989 I visited Tregantle Cliffs, near Plymouth,